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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Novel avian H7N9 influenza and its way to humans

Sir,

The recent report on novel avian H7N9 influenza by Chen et al¹ is very interesting. They concluded that the novel H7N9 bird flu virus "harbor several human virus-like signatures, which raises great concern that it may have a higher probability to cross species barriers and infect humans."¹ In fact, there are many recent reports on the assessment of the pandemic potential of this new virus. Of interest, most reports point out that there is still no trend that the new virus can cause a worldwide pandemic.^{2,3} Nevertheless, this does not mean that it will not cause any pandemic. Nishiura et al,³ based on present data, proposed that "human to human transmission" is extremely possible. Owing to the dynamic genetic change within the viral structure, if there is a sense mutation that supports transmission of this virus among human beings, a serious worldwide pandemic can occur.

References

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